

Definition

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) helps people with disabilities obtain and maintain employment. In Missouri, it operates under the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Eligibility

- Do you have a physical or mental impairment?
- Does your impairment make it difficult for you to be employed?
- Can VR services assist you in returning to employment?

If the answer to each of these questions is “yes,” you may be eligible for VR services. The person who will work directly with you is called a VR counselor. Your counselor may not be able to tell right away if you are eligible for services; therefore, you may need to be examined or tested further.

Your counselor will determine if you are eligible for services within a reasonable period of time. This will usually be done within 60 days after you have applied for services unless exceptional and unforeseen circumstances occur. Your cooperation is necessary to assist in obtaining records and to keep all appointments scheduled by your counselor.

If you are eligible, you and your counselor will work toward an employment outcome. You may be sent to a rehabilitation facility where experts will conduct further studies to help determine the best type of employment for you.

Due to restricted funding, the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is unable to provide services to all individuals with disabilities at this time. A statewide Order of Selection has been implemented, and individuals will be served on the basis of the severity of their disability.

A plan for you

If you are eligible for rehabilitation services, you and your counselor will develop a vocational goal that will assist you in reaching an employment outcome. This is known as your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). At all stages throughout your VR program, you will be provided vocational information and guidance allowing you to make informed choices regarding your employment. At least every 12 months, your plan will be reviewed with you to see if it is still the best plan for you. It is your responsibility to put forth your best effort to reach your employment outcome. Your plan will list many of your responsibilities, and these will vary depending upon the type of service.

Services to help you become employed

VR provides a wide range of services. You and your counselor will determine which services are required to help you become employed. **Depending upon your income and resources, some of the services may be at no cost, partial cost or all cost to you.** Types of services that may be provided include:

- assessment to determine the extent of your disability and what services are required for you to become employed.
- guidance in choosing suitable employment.
- individual counseling during the rehabilitation process.
- medical, surgical, psychiatric or hospital care to reduce or remove disabling conditions that prevent you from working.
- assistive devices (such as artificial limbs, wheelchairs or hearing aids) that increase your ability to work.
- vocational training to prepare you for employment. This may include tuition/fees as well as books/supplies for education in a college, university, trade school, community rehabilitation program or on-the-job training program.
- transportation costs necessary for you to participate in a training program.
- job-related tools and licenses for you when you are ready to go to work.

- help in developing job-seeking skills.
- assistance in finding you a job.

Who pays for VR services?

No services will be paid by VR unless officially authorized before they are provided.

Your counselor will prepare an official authorization listing the service(s), cost and payee. When your counselor uses an authorization, VR will send a copy of the form to you and a copy to the person or company providing the service. If the authorization provides for money to be paid directly to you, you must bill VR for the amount authorized. Your counselor will assist you with any questions concerning authorizations or the billing process. You are encouraged to participate in the cost of services.

Putting People First

Putting People First means ensuring that VR provides the highest quality of employment-oriented services to Missourians with disabilities. All of our policies, procedures and practices will reflect our commitment to providing consumers with the highest quality of services available. This commitment will always reflect and support VR's mission.

We will:

- treat you with courtesy and respect.
- respond to you in a timely and professional manner.
- ensure informed choice and encourage your involvement in the rehabilitation process.
- make information and services easily accessible.
- ensure you are assisted by staff who are caring and competent.
- welcome your suggestions and comments and promptly respond to your concerns.
- serve as an advocate for you.
- inform you of your rights as a consumer.

Client Assistance Program

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services operates a Client Assistance Program (CAP) that may be of interest and help to you. CAP provides several services including assistance with advocacy or other measures to protect your rights under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. CAP can also provide information about other agencies and programs in Missouri that offer rehabilitation services to people with disabilities.

You may contact CAP by writing or calling:

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services
925 S. Country Club Drive
Jefferson City, MO 65109-0352
Phone: (800) 392-8667

People who are deaf/hard of hearing

Counselors trained in manual communication are located in VR offices in Columbia, Farmington, Kansas City, Springfield and St. Louis. VR district offices may be contacted through Relay Missouri at (800) 735-2966 (TTY), (866) 735-2460 (VOICE) or by dialing 711.

Your right to appeal

You have the right to appeal any time you do not agree with a decision about your case made by your counselor or by anyone else with the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

For example, if you are told you are not eligible for VR services, you may appeal that decision. If you do not agree with the plan your counselor develops with you, you may appeal that decision. Also, if your counselor wants to change your plan and you do not agree with the change, you may appeal that decision.

First, tell your counselor you would like to appeal. If the counselor explains the reason for the decision and you still do not agree, you may request to speak with the supervisor of the VR district office that is handling your case. You may, however, request a formal review at any time.

Formal reviews will be held within 60 days of the request. Requests should be made by contacting the Coordinator of Development and Consumer Affairs at info@vr.dese.mo.gov.

You also have a right to request mediation on the issue or to contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to assist you. If you wish to pursue mediation, contact the Coordinator of Development and Consumer Affairs at info@vr.dese.mo.gov.

Confidential information

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation operates under the authority and regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. It is necessary for VR to gather personal information about you that may include medical, psychological and work history to determine your eligibility for the program. It is important to have your cooperation during this process so that a determination can be made about your eligibility for services. Lack of cooperation on your part may result in services being denied.

VR works closely with various agencies such as the Departments of Higher Education, Mental Health and

Social Services, along with local school districts, in providing services to people with disabilities. VR has cooperative agreements with these agencies that routinely allow certain information such as names, addresses, Social Security numbers, phone numbers, educational/work histories and income information to be shared without an individual's written consent. This is only for the purpose of providing and coordinating services with these agencies related to your rehabilitation program. **In these situations, information about your disability will not be released unless you or your representative consent or request it in writing.**

If you are attending a community rehabilitation program or are receiving services from medical care professionals or service providers, information about you or your disability may be released without your or your representative's written consent. In these situations, personal information about you will only be released when it is directly related to your rehabilitation program and is necessary to provide services. In most other instances, however, VR will ask for your or your representative's written consent before releasing any of your personal information.

Sometimes individuals will request copies of information in their files. VR will provide timely copies when the individual or his or her representative requests it in writing. In some situations, a file may contain information that the agency feels could be harmful to the individual. In these instances, the information will not be released directly to the individual but must be provided to his or her court-appointed representative or a third party chosen by the individual. This may include an advocate or a qualified medical or mental health professional.

If you or your representative has questions about the release of information in your file, your VR counselor will assist you.

Compliance with the Civil Rights Act

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Services are provided without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or disability.

Any individual may file a written complaint with VR or with the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Education, or both, if he or she believes that discrimination is being practiced.

Contact:

Coordinator of Development and Consumer Affairs
Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
3024 Dupont Circle
Jefferson City, MO 65109-6188
Phone: (573) 751-3251
Toll-free: (877) 222-8963
TTY: (573) 751-0881
Fax: (573) 751-1441
E-mail: info@vr.dese.mo.gov
Web site: <http://vr.dese.mo.gov>

This brochure explains processes of Vocational Rehabilitation and your appeal rights and responsibilities. If you do not understand the information in this brochure, call the Coordinator of Development and Consumer Affairs at (573) 751-3251 or toll-free at (877) 222-8963.



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or Relay Missouri 800-735-2966.